

DELACARE RULE GUIDANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN ECESAC 2013-11

**Technical Assistance Bulletin for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers
Safe Sleep Environment for Infants**

RECOMMENDATION: Use of a blanket in a crib when infants are sleeping is not recommended.

While use of a thin blanket in a crib with a sleeping infant is not currently prohibited in *DELACARE* Rules for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers, this practice is no longer recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and *Caring for Our Children*, a national resource for best practices in child care. **The Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) supports this position and encourages you to help protect infants by not using blankets in cribs while infants are sleeping.**

OCCL would like to remind you of the *DELACARE* Regulations that, if followed, help to create a safe sleep environment for infants while in child care. These regulations include:

Rule 224 E. Each child under eighteen (18) months of age and not walking shall sleep in a crib or playpen.....

Rule 226 E. Soft surfaces such as soft mattresses, pillows, sofas and waterbeds shall be prohibited as infant sleeping surfaces.

Rule 226 F. All pillows, bumper pads, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and any other soft products shall be removed from cribs while an infant is in the crib.

Rule 389. A licensee shall ensure that infants are placed on their backs when putting them down to sleep.

More infants 1-12 months old die unexpectedly during sleep than from any other type of injury but child care providers can save lives by eliminating risks in their program. The sleep surface for infants should be firm and flat with no bumpers and pillows.

In addition, car seats are designed for crash safety, not for sleep safety. **Child care providers must not leave sleeping infants in car seats or other sitting devices, such as swings (Rule 224 E).**

Child care should be a safe place for all children. Please share this information with anyone who provides care to these vulnerable children.